Holter Monitoring
A Guide to Help You Get Ready

What is Holter Monitoring?

This is a recording of your heart rhythm. It is done for 24 to 48 hours, while you go about your daily life. It is very useful in finding abnormal heart rhythms.

Why is a Holter Monitor used?

A Holter Monitor is used to record the electrical activity of the heart. This electrical activity is sometimes referred to as a heart rhythm. An abnormal heart rhythm is called an arrhythmia. An arrhythmia is a change in either the speed or pattern of the heartbeat. During this, your heart may beat too fast, too slow, or without a pattern. The Holter Monitor will monitor 24-28 hours of your heart rhythm for analysis.

Holter Monitors allow your heart rhythm to be recorded over 24 – 48 hours, while you go about your daily life.

A Holter Monitor may be ordered to:

- Find arrhythmias that may not occur during a standard ECG.
- Look for symptoms that come and go, such as palpitations, dizzy spells, or fainting spells.
- See how well your medicine or pacemaker treatment is working.

The Holter Monitor

The Holter Monitor is small and about the size of a pager. It will be placed in a pouch around your neck or waist. The Monitor has a cable that attaches to five sticky patches, called electrodes, which are place on different areas of the chest. These electrodes record the heart rhythm.

Important Reminders

- The cable, associated leads, and electrodes must remain attached for the whole recording. If an electrode comes off, clean the area and reattach the electrode. You will be given extra electrodes in case this occurs.
- Do not get the monitor, cable, leads or electrodes wet. Do not swim, take a bath, or shower while wearing the Monitor.
- Try to sleep on your back, with the recorder at your side. This will keep the patches from being pulled off.
- Avoid electric blankets, magnets, metal detectors, and high voltage areas such as power lines. Signals from such devices may affect the data.

Keeping a Diary

It is very important to keep a diary while wearing the Holter Monitor. It allows your
activities and symptoms to be compared with the ECG record.

You will need to record the date and time and duration of the following:

- Exercise and physical activity (walking/jogging/biking, yard work, household chores, snow removal).
- Physical or emotional distress causing a sudden increase in heart rate (stressful conversation or argument).
- Symptoms such as dizziness or lightheadedness, fainting, palpitations or racing heart, shortness of breath, or any chest pain/pressure or tightness symptoms.

Returning the Holter Monitor

You will return the Holter Monitor in person to the clinic where it was attached, or in the self-addressed paid envelope (limited situations). It is vital you return both the Monitor and the associated cable. You should remove all electrodes, tape and the blue pouch prior to returning the Monitor.

The Holter Monitor Results

Once the Monitor is returned to us, the data will be analyzed and provided to a UW Health Cardiologist to interpret. Those results will be provided to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results and design a treatment plan that is best for you.

For questions contact the Heart Station at (608) 263-6609.